

Pipeline safety affects citizens in each and every one of our States. In my home State of Nebraska, we experienced this just a couple months ago. In January, a ruptured natural gas pipeline exploded in the Old Market area of downtown Omaha. The disaster destroyed a historic building, and it did injure several people. The SAFE PIPES Act would encourage the use of advanced technology for pipeline mapping and help avoid accidents like this moving forward.

In California, the massive Aliso Canyon underground natural gas storage facility leak posed a serious public health threat and displaced hundreds of families from their homes. The SAFE PIPES Act would direct PHMSA to create crucial minimum standards for underground natural gas storage facilities. It would also establish an Aliso Canyon working group to ensure that similar incidents are avoided in the future. I appreciate the strong support provided by the California Senators, BARBARA BOXER and DIANNE FEINSTEIN, who helped draft the working group provisions there. They also serve as co-sponsors of our SAFE PIPES Act.

The Senate must pass this robust, bipartisan legislation. We all have a responsibility to prioritize not only the efficient permitting and construction of energy infrastructure but also the safety and the security of our Nation's extensive pipeline network.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REMEMBERING JOHN ORIZOTTI

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, John Orizotti, most famously known as "Pork Chop John," passed away on Monday in his Butte home at the age of 82. Montanans know John for his efforts to expand his restaurant's flourishing business. John bought Pork Chop John on 8 West Mercury Street in 1969, when sandwiches sold for 65 cents.

According to his oldest son Rick Orizotti, owning the shop was something he wanted to do his whole life, and he always kept his eye on it. Rick said: "He was truly very proud to be Pork Chop John. He was a man that really loved going to work, really worked hard."

John was born in Butte on September 25, 1933. He graduated from Butte High School in 1951 and married his high school sweetheart Mary Carol when he was 21 and she was 19.

He worked for his father-in-law Dan Piazzola at the Better Meat Market and then went on to open the Main Public Market in 1960 with Piazzola be-

fore buying Pork Chop John 9 years later. The restaurant has expanded to a second location on 2400 Harrison Avenue, which was formerly a Texaco gas station. After John retired 20 years ago, two of his sons, Ed and Tom Orizotti, took over the restaurant and currently run Pork Chop John.

I remember as a kid in Montana, it was the stop you made when you were on a trip. It didn't matter whether you were on a sports trip, band trip or a speech debate trip, you stopped at Pork Chop John's in Butte to grab something to eat.

In fact, the very first stop my wife and I made after we announced our campaign for the U.S. Congress in Bozeman was at Pork Chop John's in Butte to grab a sandwich.

All seven of Orizotti's children have worked at the restaurant at some point in their lives and the pork chop batter recipe remains a family secret to this day. The restaurant itself has been in the family for 47 years.

John was greatly beloved by many in his community. His past employees and friends have nothing but wonderful things to say about him, including how he would put his whole heart into all of his endeavors. Others called him gentle, caring, honest, and never having a bad word to say about anybody. He has probably been best described as one of the legends of Butte and a "Butte icon."

John Orizotti made a lasting impact on his family, community, and business. May his legacy of hard work and kind heart be forever honored and remembered.

Cindy and I offer our deepest condolences to the family.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, the sudden passing and tragic death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Scalia leaves us with a vacancy to fill on our country's highest Court, but it shouldn't lead us to a yearlong political standoff.

Article II, section 2, of the Constitution is clear: The President shall nominate a Supreme Court Justice with the advice and consent of the Senate. It doesn't say "may." It doesn't say "maybe." It isn't followed by a clause which says that Senators don't have to do their jobs in an election year. It doesn't say anything about that. And

that is the tradition of our country, that Senators—we run for office willingly, enthusiastically. We work hard to get here. We take an oath of office. Every couple of weeks, we get a paycheck. And some are saying we simply shouldn't do our job and move forward with this nomination.

Complete refusal to consider any nominee from this President is outrageous. It is indefensible, and it is unprecedented in spite of what some of my colleagues would like to say. Don't take my word for it. Senator GRASSLEY, the Republican chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said as recently as 2008 that "the reality is that the Senate has never stopped confirming judicial nominees during the last few months of a President's term." The country didn't elect Barack Obama—whether you voted for him or against him—for a 3-year term or three-fifths of a term; the country elected him for a 4-year term.

Since the Civil War, no Supreme Court vacancy has been left open for a year. For the past century, the Senate has taken action on every single pending Supreme Court nominee.

I talk to people in Ohio all the time, Republicans and Democrats alike. I talked to a Republican today who supports Senator RUBIO for President and probably votes for Republicans for President in every election. He said: I just can't believe what MITCH MCCONNELL did. I can't believe my party—the people I vote for in Senate races and House races—would possibly say that we are not going to have a hearing on this nominee.

We are not even going to meet with this nominee. I mean, a number of Senate Republicans said: We won't even shake hands. We aren't even willing to meet with a Supreme Court nominee whom the President of the United States, under the Constitution, shall appoint, whom the President of the United States submits to the U.S. Senate.

Let's look at what has happened in the past. In 1988, which was President Reagan's final year in office, a Democratic majority unanimously confirmed Justice Anthony Kennedy. That was in 1988. Again, President Reagan submitted his name in 1988. He was confirmed by a Democratic Senate. In fact, the Senate has been confirming Justices in Presidential elections since our Nation's founding. Two of President Washington's nominees were confirmed during his last years in office. Since 1916, every pending Supreme Court nominee has either received a hearing or been confirmed quickly before a hearing even took place. Think about that. A pending Supreme Court nominee has never been denied a hearing in the history of the United States. The only exception is the nominees who were confirmed without a hearing. Yet, within hours—I think only minutes, actually—within less than an hour, I believe, of the announcement of



Justice Scalia's passing, the Republican leader of the Senate, the majority leader of the Senate pretty much said: We are not going to do our job. We are not even going to have a hearing on whomever the President of the United States nominates. We are not only not going to have a hearing, he then said later, I am not even going to meet with that person. Imagine that.

So that nomination—whomever President Obama nominates—that vacancy will be more than a year for sure if the Senate does nothing on this confirmation. Again, the last time there was a vacancy for as long as 1 year was during the Civil War. It was 150 years ago. That is because there was a Civil War and the Congress wasn't very functional in those days. Members were leaving the Court, leaving the Senate and House after secession in 1861 and all the other things that happened.

We have nearly a year left in President Obama's term, about a quarter of the term the American people elected him to serve. That is plenty of time for the Senate to carefully consider and review a nominee.

President Obama—and just to make it clear, he was not just elected, he was elected decisively. I believe he is only the second Democrat in American history—surely the second Democrat since the Civil War—he is only the second Democrat since the Civil War to at least twice win a majority of the popular vote. Only President Obama, who got more than 50 percent of the vote twice, and President Roosevelt, who got more than 50 percent of the vote, I believe, four times—they were the only Democrats in 150 years who got a majority of the vote twice. President Clinton was elected twice with a plurality. President Wilson was elected twice with a plurality. President Obama and President Roosevelt were decisive wins. This wasn't an accidental win. This wasn't a candidate put into office by a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. This was a legitimate election and a decisive win.

Let's look at some of those nominees. The longest nomination on record was Justice Brandeis, who I believe was the first Jewish American to be appointed to the Supreme Court. His took 125 days. President Obama has more than 300 days left in his term.

If we fail to confirm a nominee, if Senate Republicans fail to do their job—they were elected. They were sworn in. They get paid. All of us do. We are just asking them to do their job. But if Senate Republicans don't do their job, two Supreme Court terms will pass before a new Justice is appointed.

Yesterday I spoke with Professor Peter Shane, a constitutional law professor at Ohio State's Moritz College of Law in Columbus. Professor Shane said that a vacancy of this unprecedented length on the Supreme Court "will compromise its ability to perform its proper constitutional function" and it will create "prolonged uncertainty."

I have heard so many Republicans in the Senate say that we do all these things and create uncertainty—uncertainty in the economy, uncertainty in regulation, uncertainty in the consumer bureau, whatever. This is the worst kind of uncertainty. It is self-inflicted, and it affects entirely one-third of the government, one of the three branches of government. Without a full bench, justice could be further delayed for Americans who fought for years to have their cases heard. Split decisions—4 to 4 would leave legal questions unanswered and leave Americans in different parts of the country subject to different laws. How do we prevent that? Do your job, I say to my colleagues in the Senate.

In the past, Senator McConnell himself has agreed with a normal, deliberative approach for Supreme Court nominees. He said in 2005: "Our job is to react to that nomination in a respectful and dignified way, and at the end of the process, to give that person an up-or-down vote as all nominees who have majority support have gotten throughout the history of the country."

That is what he said a decade ago.

Now he is saying the Senate will not even do our jobs. Again, we run for these offices, we get sworn in to these offices when we win elections, we get paid every two weeks; we should be doing our job. I am not saying every Republican has to vote for the President's nominee. What we are saying is meet with them. The President will do the nomination. We should begin hearings. We should meet with these nominees individually. For every Supreme Court nomination since I have been in the Senate, I have had an hour-long meeting with each nominee, and we then make our decisions based on that. We have not said we are not going to do our work, we are not going to do our jobs. How would that make sense?

The only difference now is that we have a different President. Time and again the Democrats in the Senate have given Republican Supreme Court nominees a fair hearing and the up-or-down vote they deserve. During the 7 years the Vice President chaired the Judiciary Committee, when he was a Senator here, he did his job. He oversaw the confirmation of three Justices who were nominated by Republican Presidents.

In the case of Clarence Thomas, he even allowed Justice Thomas to have an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor, even though the committee failed to report his nomination with a favorable recommendation. So what does that mean? That means that when Clarence Thomas was in front of the Judiciary Committee, a majority of members said no, they didn't want to confirm him, yet they still moved his nomination to the floor. They didn't filibuster. They didn't require 60 votes. They just said: A majority vote wins. Thomas won. Even though Democratic leadership voted against him, Thomas won 52-48. Nobody blocked him, which they

could have easily done. And the Senate did its job, the same thing we are asking the Senate to do today.

Both Justice Thomas and Justice Alito were confirmed by the Senate with fewer than 60 votes. That means, again, they could have blocked them with a filibuster. They didn't. They allowed both of them to come forward. Even though they had lots of opposition, they still allowed an up-or-down vote. Yet this time Senate Republicans are refusing to hold hearings and are, in many cases, even refusing to meet with the nominee.

Do your job. You were sworn in. You ran for these offices and then you were sworn in. Do your job. You get paid to do these jobs. Show up for work and do your job.

Can we imagine how Republicans would have reacted if Democrats had shown Ronald Reagan this same disrespect when we considered Justice Kennedy's nomination? I wasn't here then, but we certainly understand the history of the story.

The consistent attempt to delegitimize a democratically elected President is politics at its worst. In 2013, the Republicans didn't like the results of the 2012 election, so they shut down the government. Three years later they still don't like the results of the 2012 election, so they are saying: Well, forget the 2012 election, this is all about the 2016 election.

What it is really about is that the President of the United States was elected in 2012 with the majority of the vote and in an electoral college landslide. He was elected for a 4-year term—not a 3-year and 1-month term, not three-fifths of a term—a 4-year term. American history, in spite of what my colleagues like to say with their revisionist history—in spite of what they like to say about revisionist history, the fact is we have done this in the fourth year or the eighth year of many Presidents. Now they are trying to—as they shut down the government in response to the 2012 election of which they didn't like the outcome, now they are trying to shut down the Supreme Court process with a year left in this President's term. You don't shut the whole system down when you don't get your way. It is a dangerous precedent that undermines our democracy.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle justified this saying: We need to let the people make the choice. Well, they did. They made their choice in 2012 by selecting a President for a 4-year term. This is the fourth year of his term. There is no reason this President shouldn't have the obligation and the right to nominate a candidate and send a name to the Senate, and there is no reason that Senators shouldn't do their jobs—have hearings, meet with the nominee, bring him to the floor for a vote with a 50-vote threshold—a majority vote—and see what happens. They may vote no. If they vote no, that is a legitimate exercise, but if they are



not willing to go through the process and see what might happen—see what the public judges as the right decision in whether to confirm or not—they are not doing their jobs.

It may be asking too much when I have seen the partisanship and the head-in-the-sand attitudes and the fight-this-president-at-all-costs views of so many on the other side, but I expect this Senate to put politics aside and give a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote to any qualified nominee because that is our job.

Simply put, we need to do our job.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Nebraska.

#### HONORING NEBRASKA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise today to continue my tribute to this current generation of Nebraska heroes by remembering those who died defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of our fallen Nebraskans has a special story to tell. Over the next year and beyond, I will continue to devote time here on the Senate floor to remember each of them in a special tribute to their life and to their service to our country.

Time after time, Nebraska's Gold Star families tell me the same thing. They hope and pray that the supreme sacrifices of their loved ones will always be remembered.

SERGEANT JEFFREY HANSEN

Today I want to celebrate the life of SGT Jeffrey Hansen of Cairo, NE.

Jeff grew up with the heart of a soldier. He enjoyed an all-American childhood, spending time outdoors, hunting, playing football, and staying in shape. Born in Minden, NE, and a 1993 graduate of Bertrand High School, Jeff attended college at the University of Nebraska at Kearney before graduating in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in athletic training.

Over the years, the urge to serve his country tugged at Jeff. He decided to enlist with the Nebraska Army National Guard in January of 2000. A natural leader, he quickly rose through the ranks, serving as an assistant squad leader, fire team leader, and squad leader before his last assignment as a fire support sergeant.

Jeff exhibited outstanding leadership as a member of Troop A in the 1-167th Cavalry of the Nebraska Army National Guard. Friends remember Jeff as an awesome teacher and an amazing mentor. SGT Brad Jessen recalls how Jeff was very soft spoken, but he always had something intelligent to say.

In civilian life, Jeff became a Kearney police officer in 2002, and he later joined the Department of Veterans Affairs Police force in Grand Island. James Arends, who worked with him as a sergeant in the VA Police Service, said, "Jeff was the strong, silent type. He didn't talk a lot, but when he did, people listened."

Jeff was also a loving husband. He met his wife Jenny at a football game at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Fate brought them together, and they began a natural and a comfortable relationship that blossomed quickly. Jenny excelled at golf in college. Jeff would attend her tournaments, cheering her on as the team progressed to a winning season. Then, after the final round of the 2002 NCAA Division II Women's Golf Tournament, Jeff came up to Jenny on the 18th green where he knelt down and proposed.

That same year, Jeff was promoted to sergeant and recognized for outstanding gunnery marksmanship. Jeff and Jenny also began discussing their future plans. Their talks became more intense when Jeff's unit, the 1-167th Cavalry, was called to duty in Bosnia.

Jeff and Jenny wasted no time, and they were married on October 12, 2002. Two days later, Jeff left for Bosnia. After 11 months, Jeff returned home and the two settled down back in Cairo, NE.

A world away, the war in Iraq continued. By the fall of 2005, the American public was hopeful that major military operations in the region would be coming to an end. However, the bombing of the al-Askari mosque in February of 2006 ignited a Sunni-Shia civil war that plunged Iraq deeper into violence. At that time, the American military was operating as a peacekeeping force, but things quickly turned deadly, and the coalition found themselves engaged in dramatic wartime operations.

Jeff's unit arrived in Iraq just before the al-Askari mosque bombing. Operating out of Balad Air Base, his unit, "the Cav," was known for their ability to complete security operations in one of the most violent areas of the country. The days were long, and with each mission they faced imminent danger. All the while, Jeff kept his head in the game and inspired his battle buddies to do the same.

While Jeff was gone, Jenny remained active, and she continued to excel on the golf course. She won the Nebraska Women's State Amateur Golf Championship and qualified for the 2006 U.S. Women's Amateur Open. As she continued to advance, Jenny began thinking about playing the sport professionally, so she wrote to Jeff, asking for his guidance and thoughts on this important new stage—one they would share and navigate on their journey together.

Back in Iraq, Jeff headed out on patrol where conditions worsened with limited visibility. Out of nowhere, Jeff's humvee hit a sinkhole and it flipped, landing upside down in a canal. As this was unfolding, Jeff pushed the other soldiers out of the vehicle, all of whom survived the crash. Meanwhile, Jeff was still in the humvee and critically injured. SGT Brad Jessen remained at the scene, keeping Jeff alive until the medical team arrived. Jeff was quickly flown to Germany for emergency care.

Jenny was at work when the phone rang. "There's been an accident," she was told. "We need you to come to Germany."

It seemed like an eternity before Jenny was able to reach Jeff's side at the hospital in Germany. As soon as she arrived, it was clear Jeff was not going to make it home. He passed away a few days later, with Jenny at his side.

Jenny returned home to Nebraska, saying goodbye to Jeff one last time and bracing for a life without the man she loved.

Shortly after the funeral, a letter arrived. It was from Jeff, and there was a reply to her questions about golf and their future. He had written to tell his wife to pursue her dream. He told her to find the focus and dedication that she yearned for in her life. If there was something she wanted to pursue, he would support her every step of the way.

So Jenny pursued that dream. She competed for and she earned a spot on the Ladies Professional Golf Association tour, and she played in a number of professional tournaments.

But as any Nebraskan can understand, "the good life" pulled her back. Today, she is the mother of three beautiful children. She still reads the letters from Jeff every once in a while, and Jeff is with her every day in her heart.

For his service in Iraq, Jeff was awarded the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal. He was also posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, the Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

Jeff is survived by his widow Jenny, his father Robert, and his brother Jeremy. Our Nation and all Nebraskans are forever indebted to his service and sacrifice.

SGT Jeffrey Hansen is a hero, and I am honored to tell his story, lest we forget his life and the freedom he fought to defend.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I think we are all very touched and moved by Senator FISCHER's remarks and the thoughts of the entire body go out to Sergeant Hansen's family and those he left behind.

I am on the floor today with no better news. We all woke up just days ago to the news of another mass shooting, this time in Kalamazoo. Saturday, another community was changed forever by gun violence. We live it every day in Connecticut, still mourning 20 dead first-graders and 6 teachers who protected them.

In this case, the alleged killer used a semiautomatic handgun to kill six people and injure at least two others